



United States
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Natural
Resources
Conservation
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2001 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Customer Focus

Robert "Gene" Merrill had a serious overgrazing problem on his ranch near Ramah, New Mexico. Too many cows, continuous grazing, marginal soils, not enough rain, and barely enough income to operate. A common situation in western New Mexico. In the fall of 2000 Gene applied for assistance through an EQIP Geographic Priority Area, the Zuni River Watershed. The Local Work Group considered overgrazing as the most serious problem facing ranchers in the GPA. A special incentive payment was approved for prescribed grazing management. Gene signed up his entire 2,600 acre ranch. Under his agreement with USDA, Gene agreed to remove all of his livestock for the entire length of his 5 year contract. He is using EQIP funds and NRCS technical assistance to install fencing, ponds (wildlife and livestock water), wildlife water guzzlers, brush thinning, and tree thinning via firewood harvest. These practices will help him do a much better job of management when the cattle are re-introduced in 2003. In the mean time something bordering on amazing has happened on the ungrazed land. There has been a literal explosion of plant growth, especially western wheatgrass, and all within the first year of livestock deferment. NRCS District Conservationist Ed Oliver never expected the land to rebound so quickly. On one of his visits to the ranch this summer, Ed noticed what appeared to be a horse grazing on the unit. Concerned that some livestock had been turned back into the deferred grazing unit, he continued to investigate. The horses turned out to be an cow elk with calves, who had returned to the ranch.

New Mexico Summary

Overview

In New Mexico, strong interest and participation in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) continued through FY 2001. Applications requesting Federal cost-share funds totaling over \$6.5 million dollars were submitted by 447 landowners. The New Mexico FY 2001 allocation for financial assistance was about \$4.6 million. This is a shortfall of about \$1.0 million to meet current client needs. NRCS staff and our partners developed and approved 348 EQIP conservation plans and contracts, which obligated nearly 99 percent of allocated financial assistance funds. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees in New Mexico devoted over 50,000 hours to EQIP administration in FY 2001. This is equivalent to \$1.1 million in wages associated with the EQIP.

Accomplishments

EQIP financial assistance has been distributed in New Mexico through 26 Geographic Priority Areas (GPA) and 3 statewide Natural Resource Concern (NRC) projects. About \$3.0 million in EQIP Federal cost-share dollars were obligated in GPAs and \$1.6 million obligated in NRC projects. FY 2001 EQIP conservation plans and contracts covered nearly 43,000 acres throughout the State. About 1500 clients were provided assistance associated with EQIP in New Mexico as reported in PRMS Since the inception of EQIP in New Mexico, over 20,000 distinct conservation practices have been planned in EQIP contracts.

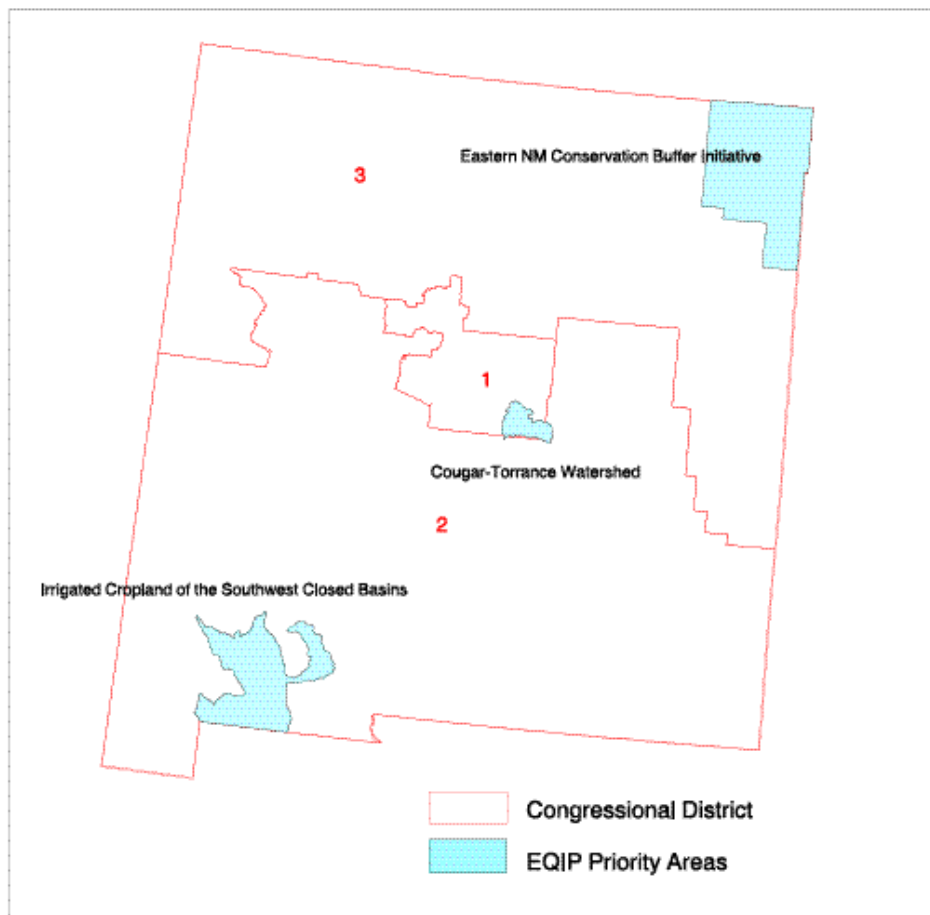
Outlook

If participation were a measure of success of this program, New Mexico would report tremendous success with EQIP. The total unmet need requests from clients are \$1.0 million in FY 2001, and the total unmet need of unfunded GPAs (approved GPA applications that have not been funded) is about \$2.0 million. These figures indicate the need for continued program support to address significant resource concerns.

State Contact

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New Mexico EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



New Mexico EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (97-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$237,100	21	\$1,336,557	129
District 2	1,964,357	129	7,844,348	682
District 3	2,646,734	198	9,450,238	829
State Totals	\$4,848,191	348	\$18,631,143	1640

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